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TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson No. 30

BUILDERS OF THE ADYTUM

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Lesson Thirty

DEATH

On the surface, the skeleton of Key 13 is a conventional representation of the "Grim Reaper". To the eye of the initiated it conveys a reminder that the bony structure of the body is the foundation of its every motion. Because our muscles are attached to our bones we can walk, move our hands and feet, and so on. Even the involuntary muscles are connected with the skeleton, and could not move otherwise. Thus what is shown here is really the basis of all our bodily activities. Symbolically, therefore, it stands for that which is the basis of all function and of all growth and development.

This something is the One Power, specialized in the reproductive functions of the body. It is the **seed power**, and it is to this that the conventionalized picture of a seed, in the upper left-hand corner of the Key, refers. This little seed is composed of two ovals, that is, of two zeroes.

From the smaller oval five rays extend toward the limits of the larger one. The two ovals are joined so that they are really one. Here is a simple hieroglyphic for the process of manifestation.

The inner and smaller oval is the source of radiant energy differentiated as ether, fire, water, air and earth. (In later lessons you will learn more about the inner meanings of these elements.) This energy fills the space enclosed by the larger oval which is one with the smaller oval. This expresses a fundamental doctrine of Ageless Wisdom:

The Inner Power projects itself, or a seeming extension of itself, as a space (the large oval) and fills that space with forms of energy whose combination constitutes the body of the universe.

Copy this underlined statement into your notebook. Read it several times, and if you can, add to it some thoughts of your own. In due course, you will come to understand that it is a concise and accurate statement of the way the universe comes into being.

("Comes" is used in the present tense because Ageless Wisdom has always taught that creation is a continuing and everlasting process. While modern scientists have as yet not accepted the fact of continuing and spontaneous creation of matter and energy in the inter-stellar spaces, interesting theories on this subject have recently been advanced by eminent physicists. Ed.)

Two details of this skeleton will arrest the attention of any artist or anatomist who sees the picture. The figure is twisted at two points, one just above the pelvis, the other at the neck. This would be obvious were the skeleton covered with flesh. It would be a posture no contortionist could imitate. The force here symbolized must be twisted, or reversed, in order to perform its highest function.

The skeleton walks from north to south, from the darkness of ignorance to the light of perfection. It represents the framework of all progress—the disintegration of form for the sake of releasing energy and the growth of new forms.

The handle of the scythe is shaped like a letter T. Thus it has the same meaning as the gallows of the Hanged Man, for T and Tav are two forms of the same letter. Thus the handle of the scythe is connected with ideas Tarot symbolizes by Key 21, the World.

The blade of the scythe is shaped like a crescent suggesting the moon and referring to subconscious powers symbolized by Key 2. Yet the material of the blade is steel, a metal attributed to Mars. The red background of Key 13 is another reference to Mars.

The river flows toward the sun. It starts in the north and makes a bend so that it also flows eastward. The bend in the river has the same significance as the twist in the skeleton's spine. It intimates a change of direction in the current of energy. Remember that this is the river which begins in the robe of the High Priestess, and makes a waterfall in the Empress' garden. Trace it through the other Tarot Keys.

The sun is another important detail. The idea of death as the end of personal existence is usually associated with west and with sunset. In this Key, however, the sun is rising. This intimates that the power men call death is really the power of life. Every dissolution of form brings about the birth of new ones.

The rising sun is connected with the letter Daleth and with the symbolism of the Empress. A little meditation on this relationship will deepen your understanding of Key 12 which precedes Key 13. Note that the digits of 12 add to 3. The rising sun refers to the dawn of the higher consciousness in the state of Samadhi symbolized by the Hanged Man. This dawn of a new knowing is what is behind the transformation shown by Key 13.

The white rose refers to the planet Uranus and has the same meanings as the rose in the left hand of the Fool. Review what is written concerning it in Lesson 4. Remember also that the rose is related to the number 5 and review what is said of this in Lesson 6. The key thought is that mastery of the subtle forms of the Mars force is a work of adaptation, symbolized by the number 5, and by the five-pointed star or pentagram which is explained in Lesson 13.

The woman's head at the left of the picture is a symbol of understanding for reasons which will be evident to you when you take up the study of the Qabalistic Tree of Life. In the Qabalah, the Sephirah named Understanding is usually called the Mother, but we are told that in the perfection of the Great Work, the Queen and the Mother are made one.

The man's head represents Wisdom, and also Beauty, for it is the Qabalistic symbol of that which, as Father, is termed Wisdom, and, as Son, is called Beauty. Yet remember that the Father and the Son are in perfect union and that unity is intimated here.

Three hands are shown. Two are active, springing up from the earth. The third is passive, resting palm downward on the surface of the ground. The active hands represent the new works which result from the transformation indicated by Key 13. The passive hand is a reference to Yod, the Great Hand, of which we become aware in the higher order of knowing.

Only one foot is shown because this picture refers to the end of the Piscean Age and the zodiacal sign Pisces rules the feet. That is to say, we are in the latter end of the Piscean Dispensation.

These details of the three hands and the one foot are in strict conformity to the esoteric Tarot which has never been published. They are also in agreement with the early exoteric Tarot shown in Court de Gebelin's MONDE PRIMITIF, and reproduced in Papus' TAROT OF THE BOHEMIANS, and in THE KEY OF DESTINY, by Dr. and Mrs. Curtiss.

For good reasons, much has been left to your intuition with respect to this Key. Lessons like these are not a proper medium for practical instruction in the reversal of the currents of the Mars force. Yet we believe enough has been said to put you on the track of principles. If you follow this lesson through, with Key 13 before you, many valuable intimations should present themselves to you, especially in meditation.

In the language of pictorial symbolism, understood perfectly by your subconscious mind because it is the one truly universal language transcending the limitations of human speech, Key 13 tells the secret of secrets and passes on to you our inheritance from the wise men who have gone this way before us.

It is a secret which kills out the old mistaken conceptions of the place of personality in the scheme of things. It is a secret which truly makes one free from the "last enemy" by giving us direct perception of life eternal.

As you progress in the path of practical occultism, this will become to you more and more an open secret. As you begin to understand it, you will understand also the reasons for the careful reserve concerning it which is characteristic of all truly wise instruction, both ancient and modern.

He who knows this secret has in his hands a power which might be used to overturn the world. Yet no person learns it until he is truly prepared, and, more than anything else, this means such **ethical** preparation that no temptation to misuse this power could **ever be sufficient** to turn the knower from the path of strictly **constructive** and **beneficent** application of the force he is able to control.

For the present, then, school yourself to know that change is never your enemy. Strive to become one of those of whom the BHAGAVAD-GITA says: "The wise in heart mourn neither those who live, nor those that die. Nor I, nor thou, nor any of these, ever was not, nor ever will not be, for ever and for ever afterwards. All that doth live, lives always! To man's frame, as there come infancy and youth and age, so come there raisings-up and laying down of other and of other life-abodes, which the wise know, and fear not."

THE MEANING OF L. V. X.

Frequently in the course of your lessons and correspondence, you will come upon the word "L.V.X." This is intended as a brief explanation of its meaning.

L. V. X. stands primarily for **Lux** the Latin noun for **Light**. In the Western School of occultism this word is often written with capital letters separated by periods to call attention to the values of the letters in the Roman system of numeration. L indicates 50, V stands for 5, and X is 10. Thus the total value of the word is 65.

This number represents the operation of the power symbolized by 5 as that power is expressed through the agency symbolized by 6. In occultism, therefore, 65 sums up the Great Work, since it is the numerical sign of the manifestation of the power of the pentagram (5) through the agency of the hexagram (6).

In practical occultism, the pentagram, or five-pointed star, is the sign of the Christos, the spiritual force of the I AM seated in the hearts of men; and the hexagram, or six-pointed star, is a symbol of the cosmic forces surrounding man and constituting his environment. The pentagram is the sign of the mind's domination of the forces of nature. The hexagram represents the cosmic forces and laws which make up the whole field of activity revolving round the central I AM.

Thus the number 65 expresses the occult truth that the Christos (5) at the center of the temple of human personality is actually in control over all natural forces (6). The indwelling Self is ruler of the cosmic order. Hence we find that the number 65 is the value of the Hebrew noun אדני Adonai, "Lord" (literally "my Lord"), a Divine Name which refers particularly to the One Life-power as ruler of the universe.

The same number 65 is also the sum of the values of the letters in the noun היכל, Haikal, meaning "temple" or "palace." In THE BOOK OF FORMATION we are told that this "Palace of Holiness" is located "in the midst", or "in the center". In the Biblical temple symbolism, of which Freemasonry has preserved some fragments, the **midst** is called the **sanctum sanctorum** or Holy of Holies. This room had the dimensions of a perfect cube, and is related to the whole series of symbolic ideas expressed by the cube which is shown on the seal of the B.O.T.A. In Solomon's Temple, the Holy of Holies contained the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy-seat on which rested the Shekinah or Radiant Presence of God.

In Rosicrucian tradition, L. V. X. is connected with the mystery of the cross, because the letters of the word may be formed from three equal-armed crosses.

In the rituals of certain societies conforming to old Rosicrucian traditions, three signs or tokens are given to represent the three letters of this word, and with these signs is uttered the phrase: "L. V. X., the Light of the Cross."

Because our more esoteric work has a link of connection with these traditions, we use the conclusion, "Your Brother (or Sister) in L. V. X." or sometimes simply, "In L. V. X." at the end of all our letters.

By these words we acknowledge that all wisdom and power have their source in the One Light, and by them we testify also that the One Light is the One Life. This One Life, seated in the hearts of men, is the true Self, the One Lord, Adonai, enthroned within His Holy Temple.

To the extension of that Light, and to the manifestation of its power in the lives of men, our work is dedicated. May the full glory of that Radiance be extended upon you and bring into your daily experience all the wisdom, beauty and splendor of its illumination.

Yea, immortality is known to the wise
Who understand the secret of my perpetual being
The secret whereof the Fish concealeth and revealeth
the mystery.
For the Fish is the Perpetual One,
The Father of Salvation.
Therefore is it written,
"Joshua was the son of Nun."
What, then, is this that continueth without ceasing?
Verily, it is I, myself,
And that which changeth not
Is the Motion which carrieth all things from place to
place.

Change perpetual is at the root of all things,
And change hath two faces,
A face of life, and a face of death.

For know ye, O Israel,
That what men call life and death
Are as beads of white and black strung upon a thread;
And this thread of perpetual change
Is mine own changeless Life,
Which bindeth together the unending series
Of little lives and deaths.

From the BOOK OF TOKENS
by Dr. Paul Foster Case

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Dear Fellow Aspirant,

At this particular stage of the correspondence lessons, many students ask the question, "What can I do to help mankind achieve true brotherhood and accomplish the Great Work?"

One thing you can do to accelerate the process is to be alert for those individuals who appear to be ready and willing to persist in the type of work Builders of the Adytum has to offer. There is a deep need to train a larger body of students in the Western Mystery system. Although the work of this Order will never be a mass movement, the lesson work acts like a leaven in the consciousness of mankind, raising humanity to higher levels of awareness. The office will supply you with copies of ***The Open Door***, ***The Great Adventure***, and small Tree of Life cards that you can make available to interested persons.

Experience indicates that media advertising is not very efficient but in some places, and at some times, it can be productive. If you would like to place an advertisement in a local magazine or newspaper, the office can supply you with a camera ready, pre-approved layout.

This Order was left a great spiritual heritage by our Founder, Paul Foster Case, and by Ann Davies, who brought the Extended Doctrines to B.O.T.A. Such a treasure cannot be held in the dark. It is intended to be shared with all who truly seek. With discretion, feel free to invite others to join us. Many seek a pathway of light, and you can help because you are a living bearer of L.V.X., the light that guides others through the Open Door and into the Great Adventure.

Each member of this Order receives treasures beyond description. As we have received abundantly, so let us give.

Fraternally, in L.V.X.,

The Board of Stewards
BUILDERS OF THE ADYTUM